

The Maple Leaf Legacy Project L'heritage de la feuille d'erable

UPDATE!

A Project in Remembrance of Canada's War Dead

Latest Numbers

The aim of the Maple Leaf Legacy Project is to photograph or obtain a photograph of every Canadian War Grave of the 20th Century.

On March 9, 2005 the number of Canadian war graves or commemorations photographed on hand is:

80,888

On the above date

821

commemorations were added.

This project relies solely on the kind assistance of the hundreds of volunteers and sponsors around the world to get the photographs or to donate funds to help pay for the good work of the project. To date the project has been honoured with the assistance of at least

585

wonderful and generous volunteers from around the world who have contributed photographs or other services.

For Canada, for Canadians, for the fallen, lest we forget.

We remember

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Won't be much longer now folks! The light of spring can be seen at the end of winter's long tunnel. The promise of warm breezes and long sunny days will soon enable you to get back into the field and snap those war graves to your hearts delight for another season.

Although the winters in Belgium are generally milder than most parts of Canada and no snow to speak of, it had been unusually cold for here in February and early March and it was snowing on a regular basis for a while there but it never really settled. Now, I don't suppose you really need a weather report from me in this forum but my point is that because of the milder winters here, the war grave photography doesn't really stop. Any opportunity to get into the field is taken by some of the hardier and more gung-ho volunteers in this part of the world.

In January, Peter Bennett, of England, Fred Killick of France, Matt, Jill and Geoff Smith, visiting from Australia, and I got out there and together we must have photographed some 8,000 graves. Many of these were the Australians and Kiwis, but also Canadian, South African and British graves. And while we were the ones actually in the field recording these graves, others such as Gary Nelson in Virginia, Heather Darney in Vancouver, Major Alain Ross, Major Richard Groves, Major Carolyn Boyd and Ms Donna Mitchell, all of Ottawa and Matt Wallace, somewhere in western Canada, were working in the comfort of their homes by indexing, or renaming the thousands of images sent them.

This process helps us in finding a specific image when it is requested until such a time as all the images can be put online. Gary Nelson, an American from the Washington D.C. area, stands out in this group for the large number of images he has dealt with and saved me dozens of hours of work. On behalf of all of the war grave projects, I would like to thank him and the others for this important help.

Starting this week, I am going to be taking some lessons in a computer web design program so, hopefully, before too long I will be able to present you with

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a revamped, more professional looking web site. Unfortunately, as I was afraid, last Update's announcement of the pending launch of our online database was premature. I wish I could explain it but I cannot. Our volunteer simply stopped doing the work with no explanation, no phone call or email. I really don't understand why someone would commit to doing something over and over again over a period of four years and work on it to the point of being 90% there and then just stop with one week left to our self imposed deadline.

April is shaping up to be a busy month around here for me. I expect no less than 6 volunteers visiting from Canada at various points that month. Most of them have the



Damage to the Vimy Memorial – Photo courtesy of Veterans Affairs Canada

intention of taking war grave photos while here so we can expect a nice bump to our totals that month. I fully expect that Belgium will be completed by the end of this year, if not sooner. There are still lots of graves to do in France though.

I have moved into my new place and hope to be able to get some furniture in the place in time to at least offer these

fine folks a drink and a place to sit down.

One final note. There is still no word on the plans to fix the inscriptions of the names on the Vimy Memorial which is undergoing renovations currently. My first two visitors to the new place were the Director of the Vimy Park, Al Puxley and the Director of National and International Memorials for Veteran's Affairs Canada, Phil Michael on **March 5**. They will advise me when they know something more on this matter and I will advise you.

Kind regards,
Steve Douglas
Project Founder & Director

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

This is the section that belongs to you - the volunteers and regional representatives. Why not let everyone know what's going on in your part of the world by sending us photos, progress reports or news about events? Please send your submissions to dcrory@chebucto.ns.ca with "MLLP Newsletter" in the subject line.

Thanks to volunteer photographer Martyn Obbard of Peterborough, Ontario who wrote to tell us about his positive experience in working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

Hello fellow MLLP volunteers: A couple of years ago I found a war grave in the cemetery of St. Paul's Anglican church in Grassmere, just east of Huntsville, Ontario. The grave is that of Private Newton Loy-nel Brooks, Reg. No. 763428, 122nd Btn., Canadian Infantry, Died 6th May 1916. This was of interest to me as I was familiar with other members of the family in the Huntsville area. However, on checking the CWGC web site I could find no record for Newton Brooks.



Instead, Mr. Brooks appears in the CWGC database as Newton L. Brook (an obvious typo). I am generally familiar with the family and know that the surname is correctly spelt as BROOKS. The casualty details on the CWGC web site give his father as Edgar Joseph Brooks. In addition Mr. Brooks' attestation papers, available on the Veterans Affairs Canada web site,

clearly show the surname as BROOKS.

After consulting with Steve (Douglas), I sent an e-mail to the CWGC on 29 November 2004 with the supporting information and asked whether it would be possible to make a correction to the database entry. I first received an auto-response indicating that my message had been passed to the Enquiries Department, but

a couple of hours later had a personal response indicating that my enquiry would be responded to but that there was a 4-6 week backlog at the time. On 17 February 2005 I received another e-mail from the Enquiries Department indicating that they had amended the database to correct the spelling of Private Brooks' surname. The correction will appear on the Internet site when it is next updated. The staff of

the Enquiries Department were courteous in their replies, dealt with the inquiry promptly, and were appreciative of the chance to correct even a small error. Private Brooks' descendants should be able to find his records a bit easier on the CWGC web site soon.

Martyn Obbard
Peterborough, Ontario

More on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission: The CWGC was established by a Royal Charter in 1917. Its duties are to mark and maintain the graves of the members of the forces of the Commonwealth who died during the two world wars, to build and maintain memorials to the dead whose graves are unknown, and to keep records and registers. The Commission thus cares for 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in 150 countries including 110,000 Canadians in 75 countries. For more information on the CWGC, visit the Commission's web page at: www.cwgc.org.

Here's some late breaking news from one of our British contacts, Garrick Webster, the editor of "Your Family Tree". This item will be of interest to all those concerned about the preservation of military heritage.

As we go to press, it has come to my attention that in April the MOD intends to destroy some 6 million records of medals issued to WW1 personnel. I think you will agree that we cannot let them do so.

Our military expert Paul Reed has been looking into the matter and it appears that the private facility used by the MOD to hold the records at Hayes wants to relocate and charge the MOD for moving the cards. The MOD's response is to get rid of the 140 filing cabinets that contain the 4-6 cards. The National Archives doesn't want to take on the cards because it has already microfiched them and the microfiche has been digitally scanned (see www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

This isn't good enough. This is the only complete and untouched record of First World War soldiers left. Other service records were burned during WW2. Only the

fronts of the cards have been scanned and we believe that written on the back of many of these cards is the address that the medals were sent to. Often, it isn't possible to determine whether the record of the medals issued relates to your ancestor or another person without checking this address.

First, the cards need to be preserved. They then need to be scanned properly, front and back, and re-indexed. If the National Archives won't step in, perhaps someone else will. The Imperial War Museum? The Veteran's Association?

The MOD claims it holds copyright on the cards and that it can do what it wishes with them. I'd argue that these cards are part of the nation's heritage.

They are public records, and I'd remind the MOD that the descendants of WW1 soldiers pay their taxes. The cards remind us of the enormous

*Victory Medal
(Courtesy of Veterans
Affairs Canada)*

sacrifice and loss incurred by men and women in this country during WW1, and of their bravery in adversity. They enable the children and grandchildren of those who died, and those who survived, to find out some of the lost details of their forebears.

To save the cards we must take action. We're instituting a campaign to urge the Minister of Defence, Geoff Hoon, and the Director of the National Archives, Sarah Tyacke, to prevent the destruction of these records straight away. Address your letter to us and we'll pass it on to these authorities:

Rt Hon Geoff Hoon & Sarah Tyacke
Save the Medal Index Cards
c/o Your Family Tree
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW

Alternatively, send an email headed 'Save the Medal Index Cards' to us at <yfted@futurenet.co.uk>. Do it now - the records are due to be destroyed in April.

Garrick Webster, Editor, "Your Family Tree"

WEB LINKS

The CBC's highly acclaimed three-part series, "Canada's War in Colour", will be repeated on CBC NewsWorld starting May 8. Originally broadcast in January, the series highlights stunning newly discovered colour footage of the Second World War from home and overseas. On the web page:

www.cbc.ca/documentaries/canadaswar/about.html

you can learn how the CBC collected the material for this remarkable series and also view short excerpts from each of the three programs. There are also instructions for how to purchase a copy of the series.

Here's what the Toronto Globe and Mail's TV Critic, John Doyle, said about the programs:

"The colour footage is spectacular, sometimes saddening and often utterly compelling. Most people know the Second World War from black-and-white footage and that's a distancing experience.

"Here, the emphasis is on the lives of ordinary people, either going about their daily lives or learning to cope with the traumatic effects of the war. Much of the narrative is drawn from people's diaries and letters.

*"This is not mere nostalgia. What we see in **Canada's War in Colour** is raw and evocative beyond what we have seen before. The colour footage often taken by ordinary people adds an extra dimension to our understanding of the war and those who lived through it." -- Courtesy of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*



A scene from "Canada's War in Colour".

PRESS CLIPS

Memorial honours Mounties 'who have given everything'

Fri, 11 Mar 2005 10:46:51 EST -- CBC News

As RCMP officers bowed their heads and blinked away tears, the haunting bugle notes of the Last Post hung over the final moments of a memorial service for four constables gunned down in the line of duty last



week. Thousands of police officers, mourners and dignitaries gathered inside an Edmonton pavilion to honour Constables Peter Schiemann, Leo Johnston, Anthony Gordon and Brock Myrol in the largest memorial service in the Mounties' history. The officers were shot and killed while investigating stolen property and a marijuana grow operation last Thursday near Mayerthorpe, Alta. Their killer, James Roszko, also shot himself.

(Please see the tribute to the RCMP fallen on the MLLP web site: www.mapleleaflegacy.ca)

Photo courtesy of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

British soldier awarded rare Victoria Cross

CBC News

LONDON - A 25-year-old British soldier who twice saved his crew from ambush in Iraq – once while he was suffering from a serious head wound – has become the first living person in 40 years to win Britain's top military honour.

Pte. Johnson Beharry of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment is the first person to be awarded the Victoria Cross since 1982 and the first living recipient since 1965.



Pte. Johnson Beharry (AP Photo)



Victoria Cross medal (left)

Beharry, who emigrated to Britain from Grenada, was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades in May 2004 and managed to drive away and get his wounded comrades out of his vehicle while he was under fire.

Six weeks later, his vehicle again came under rocket attack. Beharry, who received a serious head injury in the attack, drove his commander and other troops to safety. He drove until he lost consciousness, the Defence Ministry said.

Britain's chief of defence staff, Sir Mike Jackson, praised Beharry's "selfless heroism" that saved 30 people.

"For his repeated extreme gallantry and unquestioned valour, despite intense direct attacks, personal injury and damage to his vehicle in the face of relentless enemy action, Pte. Beharry deserves the highest possible recognition," Beharry's citation said.

Beharry, who is recovering from brain surgery for his injury, said he was just doing his job.

"Maybe I was brave, I don't know. I think anyone else could do the same thing," Beharry said.

"I don't think anyone could be as proud as I'm feeling right now," said his wife, Lynthia.

Beharry is one of only 13 living recipients of the award. Most are veterans of the Second World War, including Ernest (Smokey) Smith, Canada's last living recipient.

Queen Victoria awarded the first Victoria Cross in 1857 for bravery during the Crimean War.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Launches Music Competition (Courtesy of Veterans' Affairs Canada)

OTTAWA, ONTARIO - Feb. 18, 2005 - To coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission today launched Anthem for Remembrance - a Commonwealth-wide music composition competition for students aged 23 and under.

Anthem for Remembrance was inspired by the grave of Hugh Gordon Langton, a brilliant violinist who was killed in the First World War. His family used a small musical phrase, instead of words, as an inscription on his headstone to express their feelings of sorrow. Using the musical inscription on Hugh's headstone as inspiration, the Commission is challenging students across the Commonwealth to compose a short piece of music expressing their view on remembrance.

Peter Francis, spokesperson for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission said, "When remembering the men and women who have lost their lives in the two world wars, it can sometimes be difficult to find the best thing to say. Music can be a powerful alternative and with this in mind we have launched Anthem for Remembrance - an imaginative means of encouraging young people to think about how they want to remember those who died."

Entries must be received by 30 June and will be accepted in three categories, according to age. The judging panel will include world famous composer Mark-Anthony Turnage and renowned musician Piers Adams. A fantastic package of prizes, including the chance for the winners to have their entry professionally recorded, has been put together by the Commission, with the help and support of The Royal British Legion. Peter added, "We are not sure what we are going to get - it is very exciting! The winning entry might be a classically inspired piece or a rap song. It's all about the students using their imagination and having fun, while tackling a serious topic and perhaps challenging some of our views on how to remember the war dead."

"We are very grateful to The Royal British Legion, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Piers Adams and all those who have supported this initiative. We are looking forward to a huge response."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Peter Francis

44-01628 507163 (in England)

peter.francis@cwgc.org.

More details can be found at <http://www.cwgc.org/education/anthem.htm>



A children's choir takes a breather after singing during a recent Remembrance Day service at the National War Memorial. Courtesy of the Canadian Armed Forces.